



NEWSLETTER

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF THE MILITARY



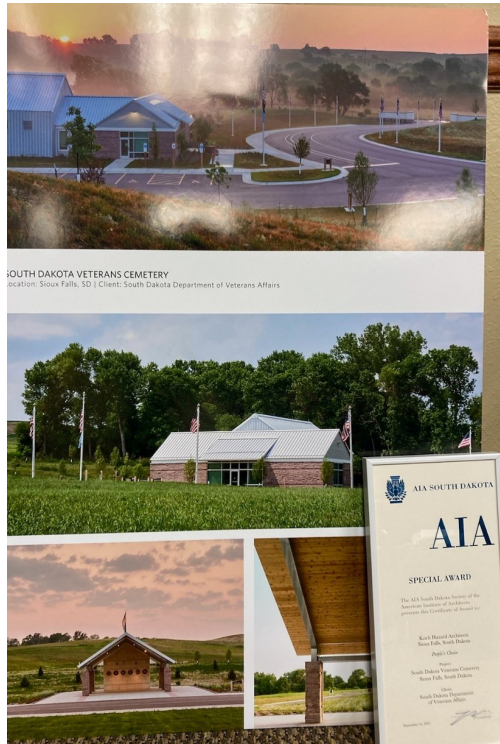
KOCH HAZARD ARCHITECTS RECOGNIZED FOR THEIR DESIGNS AT STATE VETERANS CEMETERY

Koch Hazard Architects of Sioux Falls were recently awarded the American Institute of Architects South Dakota Design People's Choice Award.

Architecture firms submitted 18 projects from across the state for consideration for the 2021 South Dakota Society of AIA awards.

Koch Hazard submitted their design and work completed at the South Dakota Veterans Cemetery in Sioux Falls.

"Koch Hazard has been a great team to work with on the design and construction of our new South Dakota Veterans Cemetery," said Aaron Pollard, deputy secretary of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs. "We appreciate the expertise this dedicated team brought to our network as we collectively worked to create this lasting memorial for South Dakota, our veterans and their loved ones who will make the cemetery their forever home."



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PEARSON SELECTED AS MEADE COUNTY VSO

Meade County Commissioners have selected Eric Pearson as their new county veterans service officer. Eric is originally from California, but while visiting family in South Dakota, he and his family decided they wanted to live the good life and moved to this great state.

Eric is an Army Veteran who welcomes the opportunity to work with veterans and assisting them in transitioning to civilian life.

Eric's office hours will be from 8:00 am—5:00 pm (MT) Monday through Friday. He can be reached at 605-347-7623 or eric.pearson@meadecounty.org.

Please join us in welcoming Eric to our veteran network.



CARRY ON

Dealing with grief can feel like carrying a heavy backpack. Join us for a collaborative retreat to learn healthy ways to unpack grief and carry on after life transitions. Grief can follow many changes or losses including:

- Loss of a loved one or pet
- Loss of a marriage or relationship
- Estranged family members
- Life transitions/life changes

Retreat will include a combination of Art Therapy, Writing Therapy, and Equine Therapy to help learn realistic and healthy ways to cope, connect, and process grief.

Sioux Falls Vet Center Retreat

When: Friday, October 1, 2021

8:30AM-2:00PM

Location: Horsepower of Sioux Falls

26659 Blue Sage Lane, Sioux Falls, SD 57106

Contact : Heather Bailey at the Sioux Falls Vet Center

605-330-4552

Space is limited. Proper PPE and distancing will be in place for this retreat.



UPDATES ABOUT THE COMPREHENSIVE ASSISTANCE FOR FAMILY CAREGIVERS

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs [Caregiver Support Program](#) is extending eligibility through Sept. 30, 2022 for veterans who are [legacy participants](#), [legacy applicants](#) and their family caregivers, participating in the [Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers](#).

This [extension](#) applies to veterans who were participating in PCAFC before Oct. 1, 2020, individuals who applied for PCAFC before Oct. 1, 2020, and those who were accepted into the program after Oct. 1, 2020. The extension will provide VA an additional year to conduct required reassessments of this cohort.

PCAFC offers enhanced clinical support for family caregivers of eligible veterans who incurred or aggravated a serious injury in the line of duty and meet other eligibility criteria. Benefits under PCAFC include education and training, enhanced respite care, counseling, a monthly stipend, CHAMPVA (if eligible), and certain travel expenses, among others.

All legacy participants, legacy applicants, and their family caregivers will be reassessed based upon the new [eligibility criteria](#) resulting from the [Final Rule](#) which became effective Oct. 1, 2020.

"During this one-year period, approximately 19,800 legacy participants, legacy applicants and their family caregivers will be reassessed.," said VA Caregiver Support Program Executive Director Colleen M. Richardson, Psy.D.

The Department will initiate a large-scale effort to complete reassessments for this cohort. This effort will begin within the next several weeks.

The earlier VA conducts reassessments, the sooner it will be able to assist with discharge planning for PCAFC participants who do not qualify under the new eligibility criteria. Discharge planning may include engaging the veteran and family caregiver in other services to include participation in the [Program of General Caregiver Support Services](#), which provides caregivers with education, training, peer support mentoring, coaching, and self-care courses.

Questions about PCAFC should be directed to local VA facility Caregiver Support Program staff or the Caregiver Support Line, toll free at 855-260-3274. Find your Caregiver Support team or Caregiver Support coordinator using the [facility locator](#).



VA MAKES STRIDES TO PROVIDE PRACTICAL RESOURCES FOR TRANSITIONING SERVICE

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs wants to ensure service members exiting the military have appropriate resources needed to transition back into civilian life. To improve the experience and outcomes of service members transitioning, VA has new initiatives, partnerships, and training opportunities.

Launched this September, the [Veteran Sponsor Partnership Network](#) enables regional, non-monetary partnerships with community organizations to help transitioning service members and their families access VA services and community resources such as employment opportunities, education benefits, and housing assistance.

The VSPN initiative supports an evidence-based and collaborative approach with community partners that helps the VA meet its strategic priorities and deliver the support and services our veterans deserve.

“This Veterans Health Administration initiative streamlines VA partnerships with community organizations that pair service members with peer sponsors who would provide one-on-one support during the military-to-civilian transition,” said VA [National Center for Healthcare Advancement and Partnerships](#) Nurse Executive Tracy L. Weistreich, Ph.D. “This resource is similar to the [military sponsorship](#) program within the Department of Defense.”

Initiatives like VSPN, along with VHA [partnerships](#) with organizations such as the nonprofit [Expiration Term of Service Sponsorship Program](#), help transitioning service members integrate into the post-military community of their choice. This links them with local sponsors who are trained to help service members find and access local resources, build relationships and resiliency and help them through the transition process.

ETS-SP developed a coordinated and cohesive approach to enable local community partners across the country. Community support for each new veteran has been shown to be a leading factor in successful transition.

[Research](#) shows engaging in VA health care with community-based interventions and sponsorship programs can help veterans achieve better outcomes across many [social determinants of health](#), experience less difficulty when transitioning back into civilian communities, and reduce risk factors related to veteran death by suicide.

“A veteran’s first year out of the military is a critical time, and the risk for suicide during this period is increased by nearly 50%,” Weistreich added.

It’s evident VA’s efforts to help transitioning service members is working.

(continued on next page)

RESOURCES (CONTINUED)

The first of the Veterans Benefits Administration's multi-year [2020 Post-Separation TAP Assessment Outcome Study Report](#) shows most veterans find the Department's Transition Assistance Program [VA Benefits Briefings](#) useful. The study's [Cross-Sectional and Longitudinal Surveys](#) is designed to determine the effectiveness of TAP on transitioning service members.

Quite beneficial is the help explaining how to access VA benefits, VA health care and preparing for economic challenges after leaving the military — to include finding employment and affordable and safe housing.

"The VA Benefits Briefings were deemed most useful, receiving approximately 76% positive rating from respondents," said Acting Under Secretary for Benefits Thomas Murphy. "We've also seen an increase in the use of benefits by respondents to the latest survey, including an increase in use of VA health care by more than 20%."

Most respondents said they adjusted well to civilian life after separation (70%) and are making progress toward their post-military goals (73%). Most are employed in full-time, permanent positions (63%). The survey results said many Veterans found transition challenging (68%) with an array of causes, including nostalgia for the camaraderie and teamwork they experienced in the military. The survey results also found 40% of respondents pursued education or training after separation.

Each year, about 200,000 service members transition from the military to civilian life. Through TAP, the VA and the Departments of Defense and Labor conduct classes that provide information, resources, and tools to help ease the transition.

The VSPN initiative falls under the VA's overall strategy to partner with regional and national organizations to assist transitioning service members with accessing VA health and benefit resources. Local, regional, and national organizations interested in partnering with the VA should contact the [National Center for Healthcare Advancement and Partnerships](#), which leads this effort in collaboration with the VA's [Transitioning Service-member/Veteran And Suicide Prevention Center](#), VA regional offices and a nationwide network of community partners.

The ETS-SP partnership is led by the [VA's Post-9/11 Transition and Case Management program](#) and facilitated by the [National Center for Healthcare Advancement and Partnerships](#), and supports the reintegration needs of transitioning service members and post-9/11 era veterans.



MATERIALS AVAILABLE TO HELP SPREAD AWARENESS ABOUT PREVENTING SUICIDE

During Suicide Prevention Month, the South Dakota Department of Social Services (DSS) is sharing tools for communities to use in the prevention of suicide. Materials to raise awareness of suicide prevention in your community are available for anyone to order through DSS. Toolkits and campaign materials are also available for diverse populations including Native Americans, LGBTQ, and veterans.

“For those contemplating suicide, often the feeling of being alone is overwhelming; but it doesn’t have to be that way,” said Department of Social Services Secretary Laurie Gill. “Sometimes even the smallest reminders that someone cares can change a mind on suicide.”

From flyers to lanyards, there are materials available to community coalitions wanting to spread the word about suicide prevention. To order free suicide prevention materials, visit sdsuicideprevention.org/get-help/order-materials/.

“Starting conversations in our communities about suicide is so important,” Gill said. “The toolkits and materials we have available can help direct those conversations and show those who are struggling that there is someone who cares. By showing you care, you can save a life.”

Online toolkits, which are step-by-step guides for communities to engage in suicide prevention, are available for community coalitions, college campuses and high school students. They have resources tailored to various populations like employers, healthcare providers, seniors, Native Americans, educators, and students. The toolkits can be found by clicking on the Toolkit tab at sdsuicideprevention.org.

Visit SDSuicidePrevention.org and BeThe1SD.com to find resources and learn more about suicide prevention.



[About Suicide](#) [Get Help](#) [State Plans](#) [Professionals](#) [Events](#) [Specific Populations](#) [Survivors](#) [Toolkits](#)

Order Suicide Prevention Materials

CROSSROADS

September 25, 2021

7:45 AM-4PM CST

National Guard Museum - Pierre, SD

If you have 18 years of service, this event is for you.

RSVP is REQUIRED

To register contact:
Mr. Kenny Wheeler
Transitional Assistance Advisor
605-737-6669
kenneth.d.wheeler.ctr@mail.mil

TOPICS COVERED

Retired Pay
Tricare
Survivor Benefit Plan
Military Funeral Honors
Survivor Outreach
MilitaryOneSource
Transition Assistance
Federal & State Benefits
VA Services

Address:

*301 E. Dakota Ave
Pierre, SD 57501*



Northern Hills Veterans Appreciation Fair

Saturday, November 13, 2021

Sturgis Community Center - Noon to 3:00

Open to ALL Veterans and their families

Veterans Service
Officers (VSO) from
Butte, Lawrence, and
Meade

VA Services
VA Flu Clinic
Entertainment
Food

Support Groups
Veteran Organizations



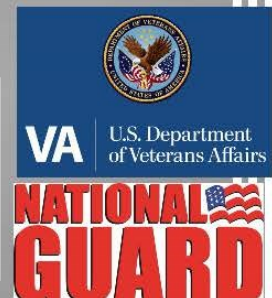
Hunting Camp
Equine Therapy
Service Dogs
Employment
Housing
Education
And more...

<https://wevegotyoursix.weebly.com>



Bring your DD214 , NGB-22 or other proof that you are a veteran.
VSO's can help you if you don't have one.

If you need assistance contact Julie Malcolm at
Northernhillsgotyoursix6@outlook.com



UPCOMING EVENTS (CONTINUED)

Sep 24—Veterans Stand Down—SD Military Heritage Alliance (1600 W. Russell Street)—Sioux Falls—9:00 am—noon (CT)

Sep 30—Folds of Honor Legacy Golf Tournament—Red Rock Golf Course—Rapid City

Oct 8—Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication—CPT Elmer Rusch—SDSU DuPuy Military Hall (1150 Campanile Avenue)—Brookings—11:00 am (CT)

Oct 9—Midwest Honor Flight—Mission 8

Oct 9—Midwest Honor Flight Welcome Home Ceremony—Sioux Falls Convention Center Arena—8:45 pm (CT)
Doors Open at 7:00 pm (CT)

Oct 9—BHSU Hero Appreciation Game—Lyle Hare Stadium—Spearfish—1:00 pm (MT)

Oct 11—State Offices Closed

Oct 11—Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication—SGT William Christensen—American Legion Post 194 (221 W. Main Street)—Parkston—1:00 pm (CT)

Oct 16—Women Veterans Alliance Event—SD Military Heritage Alliance (1600 W. Russell Street)—Sioux Falls—9:00 am—2:00 pm (CT)

Oct 16—Gallantly Forward 2021 Gala—The Monument—Lacroix Hall—Rapid City—5:00 pm (MT)

Oct 20—South Dakota Veterans Council Meeting—SD Military Heritage Alliance Building (1600 W. Russell)—Sioux Falls—9:00 am (CT)

Oct 23—Midwest Honor Flight Hangar Dance at the South Dakota Military Heritage Alliance (1600 W. Russell Street)—Sioux Falls

Nov 11—State Offices Closed

Nov 11—Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication—SSG Gregory Wagner—Hanson High School (600 Juniper Street)—Alexandria—1:00 pm (CT)

Nov 13—Northern Hills Veterans Appreciation Fair—Sturgis Community Center (1401 Lazelle Street)—12:00—3:00 pm (MT)

Nov 25-26—State Offices Closed

Dec 7—Governor's Budget Address

Dec 18—Wreaths Across America—South Dakota Veterans Cemetery—Sioux Falls—11:00 am (CT)

Dec 24—State Offices Closed

Dec 31—State Offices Closed

2022

Jan 10—POW/MIA Chair of Honor Dedication—State Capitol—2:00 pm (CT)

Jan 11—Governor's State of the State Address

Jun 12—Midwest Honor Flight Annual Honor Ride

Jul 18-23—National Veterans Golden Age Games—Sioux Falls

Audry Ricketts, Public Information Officer

South Dakota Department of the Military <https://military.sd.gov/>

South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs <https://vetaffairs.sd.gov>

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